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LAIRD CREGAR

Various commitments and problems have gummed up our schedule for the past few months; the November issue didn't get mailed until December 5th, and it looks like this issue will be quite late as well. We beg your indulgence, and thank you for your patience.

Last month's article on the PBS series *The Men Who Made the Movies* was written before the first program was aired. Since that time a number of readers have expressed their varying opinions on the quality of the shows, and we have had some reservations ourselves. The biggest faux pas noticed so far was building up to the "Born in a Trunk" number from *A Star is Born* on the George Cukor program, when Cukor has stated in several interviews that he had nothing to do with shooting that sequence! It was added after he had completed the film, and staged by choreographer Richard Barstow. Besides a tendency to overreach for symbolism and profundities in these eight directors' work, the shows reveal only a cursory knowledge of the Hollywood in which they were made. Even so, *The Men Who Made the Movies* is still a worthwhile and well-made endeavor, less important for film buffs who already know this material than for others who are just getting their feet wet.

Complicated space problems, in addition to our time bind, have edged out a regular book page this month, so in its place, we thought we would capsulize some comments on current film books in this column. First, we should correct a typo from last month; the paperback version of *Directions in Action* is $5.95, not 95c as stated.....*Fifty Years of Movie Posters* (Crown, $9.95) is certainly the best buy to come along in quite a while. John Kobal has assembled a rich collection of posters, lobby cards, advertising material, and sheet-music covers, printed in an oversized, spiral-bound book where every other page is in full-color. A bonanza for fans of such memorabilia.....Phil Silvers' autobiography *This Laugh Is on Me* (Prentice-Hall, $7.95) is one of the most pleasant surprises of the season, a delightful recollection of years in vaudeville, burlesque, Broadway, television, and Hollywood, with some candid and insightful glimpses into Judy Garland, Louis B. Mayer, Harry Cohn, and many others.....Doug McClelland's new book *Susan Hayward: The Divine Bitch* (Pinnacle, paperback, $1.25) is a highly readable study of a durable Hollywood career, knowledgeable and quite detailed on each of Hayward's films. A must for fans of this actress.....*The MGM Stock Company* (Arlington House, $14.95) is a hefty (862 pages) volume with capsule biographies of some 150 stars and featured players associated with the studio in the 30s, 40s and 50s. Basic facts and filmographies give the book reference value, and many stills are rare and striking; but much of the content is off-base, glossing over some careers and misreading others (labeling Robert Walker a rebel hero!).....Walt Lee has completed Volume 2 of his massive *Reference Guide to Fantastic Films,* the best work of its kind ever published. Credits and comments are supplied on hundreds of science fiction, fantasy, and horror films from around the world, including even cartoons and shorts. Volume 3 will be ready in early 1974. No. 1 is $9.50, 2 and 3 are $9.95 each, all three $28.00 from Walt Lee, P.O. Box 66273, Los Angeles, California 90066.

Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who made 1973 such a rewarding year for us and FFM; here's to a peaceful and happy 1974. Thanks this month to Gregory Mank, Jerry Vermilye, Milton Menell, Charles Pavlicek.

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Laird Cregar

by

Gregory Mank

"Dear Santa,

As one large man to another - surely you know what I mean when I say the only thing I want out of your pack is a new kind of screen role. Okay, I'm not exactly a small guy. Neither are you. But do I have to be a sinister and oversized guy, year after year?"

Thusly, in the Christmas issue of **Photoplay**, 1944, behemothic Hollywood heavy Laird Cregar expressed his Yuletide deisre. While Greer Garson and Margaret O'Brien asked for Pacific victories and a hike in war bond sales, the screen's celebrated psycho of films like **I WAKE UP SCREAMING** and **THE LODGER** hoped St. Nick might aid his campaign for less grotesque movie assignments.

Ironically, by the time this **Photoplay** hit the stands, Cregar was dead. The actor had augmented his letter to Santa with a brutal diet that resulted in his tragic demise at the youthful age of 28. His efforts to improve his screen image only succeeded in destroying himself.

The premature death of Laird Cregar was an unhappy end to a career that was marvelously impressive as the dulcet-voiced, immense player revealed an original, unique, and splendidly florid acting style. His ability to find and project new facets of stock parts in which he was often cast earned him the status of one of Hollywood's most popular character actors.

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Samuel Laird Cregar was born in Philadelphia, Pa., on July 28, 1916. He was the sixth of six robust sons (at maturity, he was the smallest of them!) of a wealthy, well-to-do family that traced its refined roots back to English and Scottish ancestry. His father was an importer of British woolens, and took the advantage of a business trip to enroll his eight-year-old youngest son at England's Winchester Academy. It was resultedly that the child first smelled the greasepaint – as a page boy at Stratford-On-Avon.

"From that time on, all I ever wanted to do was go on the stage," Cregar recalled. "There have been times, though when I've wished my ambition wasn't so firmly fixed."

While Cregar was at Winchester, his father died suddenly, and the boy was bundled back to Philadelphia. His mom sold the family business, and invested the resulting stipend in the education of her sons. As such, Cregar went the fashionable private school route for a time, attending the Win-

chester Academy of Longport, New Jersey, and the Episcopal Academy of Philadelphia.

Acting very soon became more than an interest; it was a passion. During his schooldays, Cregar wrote plays, acted roles, and generally became a workhorse in any dramatic outlet he could find. The monotony of general schoolwork finally wore on the boy, and at 14 he ran away to pursue the craft that so fascinated him.

The next ten years were rough ones. The large adolescent did manage to work a few summers with Pennsylvania stock companies; landed a stint with the New York Federal Theatre project; and finally secured a scholarship from the Philadelphia Rotary Company to study playwrighting and acting at the Pasadena Playhouse. Lurking in between these accomplishments were survival jobs as an usher, book salesman, doorman, and bouncer, to nourish that husky frame.

So in 1939, Cregar gleefully treked out to sunny Pasadena with his scholarship, only to find the course he hoped to pursue combining playwrighting and acting didn't exist! He decided therefore to study acting further, and the result soon proved disastrous. His obesity blocked him from securing any good roles. Soon his money ran out, and his family couldn't help him — so had theirs'. Near destitute, the young man began searching for any kind of job, but employers took one look at the 6'3", 290 lb. applicant and showed him the door. It wasn't long before Cregar was sleeping nights in a parked car and relying on friends for food.

Life was due for a turning point one way or another, and a favorable route developed. Pasadena Playhouse did **The Great American Family**, and Cregar was cast as a comic butler. He scored a hit, and on the strength of his notices, got the backing to produce **Oscar Wilde**, a play Robert Morely had

With Victor Mature in **I WAKE UP SCREAMING**

With Veronica Lake in **THIS GUN FOR HIRE**

done on Broadway. Cregar himself played Oscar, and L.A. was at his feet. No less than John Barrymore sent him a letter, hailing him as the finest young actor he had seen in twenty years. Critics unanimously praised his performance, and the nearby studios heard the hub-bub.

In 1940, Cregar played bits in Warner's **GRANNY GET YOUR GUN** and Universal's **OH JOHNNY, HOW YOU CAN LOVE**, things hardly remembered today. Now, due to his wonderful stage success, the major movie studios overtured him with contract offers. Cregar signed with Fox, not only because they offered the finest deal; "At the time, there was only one other character man, John Carradine, on the lot, and naturally we two could never vie for roles!"

* * * * * * *

Darryl Zanuck gave his new contractee his first assignment in **HUDSON'S BAY**, the story of trappers in the Hudson Valley during the pre-revolutionary reign of King Charles II. Paul Muni was the star, Gene Tierney the love interest. Cregar played the stock role of the comic sidekick who gets laughs by being stupidly cute, and fights by bumping foes with his ample gut. However, Cregar imbued his role of "Gooseberry" with such color that he was immediately recognized as a major talent. **HUDSON'S BAY**, generally considered Cregar's film bow, was released in January of '41.

Fox next cast Cregar in their flamboyant version of the bullfighting epic, **BLOOD AND SAND**. He played his first heavy – Curro, a flannel-mouthed critic of toreadors, and he was marvelous. Complimenting up-and-coming matadors with sickening prosaics, gleefully destroying down-and-out ones, and hysterically excited at ringside, he was most effective, combining phoniness and just a touch of feyness in a properly hateful mixture. The scene

where Tyrone Power dumps wine in his face ("I baptize you liar – and your second name is swine!") is unforgettable.

In this film, Cregar found himself in the company of some of Hollywood's most accomplished character players – J. Carrol Naish, Anthony Quinn, and John Carradine. Cregar was well on his way to joining their ranks.

Jack Benny's **CHARLEY'S AUNT**, one of 1941's top grossers, followed. In that chestnut, 24-year-old Cregar played the jolly aristocratic father of 31-year-old James Ellison. It was a very likeable characterization, and provided Cregar, who often joked about "the slapstick comedian in me," the opportunity to display his comic sense.

Laird Cregar won stardom via his next picture: **I WAKE UP SCREAMING**. The film was a fast-moving melodrama, with Zanuck casting two of the studio's most alluring blondes, Betty Grable and Carole Landis (as the murder victim), with beefcake boy Victor Mature in what was in '41 a pretty racy picture.

It was Cregar, however, who carried the film and won all the laurels. As a psychopathic cop with an insane love for a dead girl whose murder he is investigating, he created a character chilling, loathesome, and yet equally pitiful. With a silky, taunting voice and a sick smile, he caused quite a stir as a new kind of screen villain. Cregar was gloriously antagonistic, almost to the point of being humorously amusing. At one point in the film, he asks Mature, on whom he is trying to pin the murder, for a ride uptown; the detective takes the opportunity to take a string and teasingly tie a noose around his finger! In another, Mature wakes up, in the middle of the night to find Cregar sitting in his room, gloating over newly collected evidence! Indeed, the fanatical cop, sneering at Mature and Grable or leering at Landis in flashback, seemed to pop up everywhere (save the scene in which Grable and Mature naturally received the opportunity to flaunt their well-blessed physiques in an indoor pool scene; Laird was mercifully spared from appearing among the trunked participants). The denouement, in which Mature discovers that Cregar's apartment is a macabre shrine to the dead Landis, covered with pictures and fresh flowers, still manages to give a viewer a healthy case of the creeps.

"I Wake Up Screaming," assisted by an excellent supporting cast and New York City location shooting, was a box-office hit, and Fox found themselves with a new and totally unique star. About this time, Cregar added to his lustre by appearing in the red-hot play **The Man Who Came to Dinner** in L.A., and his future was assured. Fox somewhat re-wrote his player's contract, after which he received, besides more money, special billing on the credits – usually his name atop the supporting cast list in bold letters.

While Fox decided what to do with him next, they lent Cregar to RKO, where he performed further villainy as a Gestapo agent, dripping with refinement and sarcasm, in **JOAN OF PARIS**. The film features a thrilling climax as a determined Cregar, in black cape and top hat, leads his soldiers in pursuit of escaping R.A.F. fliers through the Parisian sewers. When they get away, the frustrated villain gives the lovely Michele Morgan, laughing ecstatically at their triumph, one of the roughest face slaps in films.

Home studio Fox then recalled Cregar and cast him in **RINGS ON HER FINGERS**, some frou-frou about a girdle salesgirl (Gene Tierney) used by a pair of high-class swindlers (Spring Byington and Cregar) to fleece a charming innocent (Henry Fonda), with whom she naturally falls in love. It was another broad comic role for Cregar, played with many happy smiles as he jumped in a pool, gave an

Cregar and Michele Morgan in **JOAN OF PARIS**

amusing impersonation as a sea captain, and served as the target for many "fat" jokes (when he returns exhilarated from horse-back riding, Miss Byington inquires as to the health of the horse).

Paramount then borrowed Cregar for what became, to the surprise of all, a classic – **THIS GUN FOR HIRE**. He played a sissified Fifth Columnist who ate mints while reading **Paris Nights** in silk pajamas, and once again combined villainy and comedy in a most entertaining style. Bosley Crowther wrote of Cregar's performance in **The New York Times**: "He is a double portrait of deceit and cowardice, edging his performance with a touch of elegance." Alan Ladd, of course, became a star through his performance in this film as the hired killer, and it is amusing to tune in his most famous film today and find him billed under Robert Preston, Veronica Lake, and Cregar.

Cregar returned to Fox to stay and was next cast in **TEN GENTLEMEN FROM WEST POINT**, the story of the founding of the academy. It gave Cregar one of his largest roles as a blood-and-guts general who labels the academy idea "political humbug," and does his best to break the recruits. When the cadets rescue him from Indians, using studied military logic, he changes his mind. It was an unusual role for Cregar, and sandwiched in between his comedy and heavy work, it stands as an excellent example of the actor's amazing versatility.

His last picture of '42 was **THE BLACK SWAN**, a technicolor pirate epic in which he portrayed the legendary Sir Henry Morgan. Decked out in a curly wig and plumed hat, he was one of the least quaint visages to movie audiences of the season and gave another colorful performance in what is today a rarely shown film.

Offscreen, Cregar displayed a quick wit and admirably professional attitude towards his work. The mild-

mannered young man explained his cinematic success thusly: "I have found that a policy of non-resistance with directors is extremely useful. Also, I once had a weight phobia until Thomas Browne Henry of the Pasadena Playhouse told me not to lose a pound of weight, but instead develop a thin man's personality — something I have cultivated assiduously ever since." He also expressed his hopes of becoming a performed playwright, and to hit the Broadway stage when film commitments allowed.

Success had hardly lessened Cregar's great love for acting. Indeed, it was constantly growing — and soon to reach a fatal climax.

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In 1943, sporting a beard, Cregar appeared for Fox in three films. His first appearance that year was in the Alice Faye musical, **HELLO, FRISCO, HELLO**, playing an iron-lunged, uncouth prospector who appears two or three times yelling about how he is going to throw solid gold watches down the street when he strikes it rich. Being an Alice Faye musical, the last reel finds him doing just that.

Cregar played none other than Lucifer in **HEAVEN CAN WAIT**, Lubitsch's wonderful film that ranks close to **ALL ABOUT EVE** as a champion dispenser of witty remarks. He was quite charming about it all, impeccably groomed and dressed, and more than hospitable to Don Ameche, his recently deceased guest.

His next picture was **HOLY MATRIMONY**, a Monty Wooley vehicle about a misanthropic artist — naturally the acerbic Wooley. Cregar played an art dealer who inadvertently gets his studio involved in a scandal when Gracie Fields, as Wooley's wife, sells him some of her husband's latest paintings. The trouble is, Wooley is pretending to be dead! Cregar cleverly managed to incorporate effeminance into his role; when his secretary reveals a little of her charming leg in his office, Cregar clears his throat in obvious disgust!

Cregar filled in that year gaps between films with radio work, including an airing of **THE MALTESE FALCON** on Lux Radio Theatre with Edward G. Robinson.

There followed Cregar's best-remembered performance — Jack the Ripper in the excellent thriller, **THE LODGER**. In the Fall of '43, Fox converted the quaint, back lot village they had used in **THE SONG OF BERNADETTE** into a much seedier locale to suggest the Whitechapel area of London that was terrorized by the brutal mutilations of the fabled Ripper. Barre Lyndon, basing the script on Marie Belloc Lowndes' famous book, turned the role of the killer into a religious, Bible quoting, soft-spoken young man whose brother's ruin due to an actress has turned the man fanatically against women — particularly women of the boards. John Brahm was the director. Merle Oberon was top-billed as the actress who brings on the Ripper's downfall, and proved quite a treat doing the can-can in tights and frilly pants; George Sanders was the Scotland Yard inspector. Sir Cedric Hardwicke and Sara Allgood played Miss Oberon's parents and the lodger's landlords.

But once again, the film belonged to Cregar. His performance was superb. The actor supplied the audience with all the complex facets of the insane murderer — from the pleasant young man who first seeks lodgings ("I tried to work in contrast by making him shy, apologetic and polite") to the wild-eyed, gasping, knife-clutching madman, hardly human as he leads the police in a climactic chase through a theatre. The films achieved instant popularity, and audiences once again found themselves with a mixture of sympathy and chills for Cregar's characterization. If he was a leading char-

acter actor before, **THE LODGER** made him a top star.

After **LODGER's** release in January of '44, the press pursued Cregar wholesale, asking of his future plans and how he felt being so effective a fiend. He replied by citing his mail: "Some people get a great kick out of evil efficiently wrought, and they write in and pat me on the back. Then too, there are the righteous types who believe I am actually the type of person I appear to be on the screen, and enumerate the various ways in which they would like to eliminate me. The ones I really like are from those few kind souls who realize I'm only an actor trying to make a living." He also joyously revealed that during production of **THE LODGER**, he had gone on a crash diet and had shed 70 lbs. in the matter of only ten weeks! The epicurean life style of Hollywood had boosted Cregar's weight to 325 lbs., and he had taken advantage of the busy shooting schedule to diet away much of the obesity he felt would eventually greatly limit his acting potential. He announced intentions of losing more weight, spoke optimistically about his playwrighting and stage ambitions, and commented on his future at Fox: "I may be doing something non-villainous in the motion pictures one of these days – I have the feeling the studio is almost beginning to consider me an actor now, instead of a type."

If that last statement had only been true, Laird Cregar would probably still be acting today. The fact that Hollywood did not fulfill Cregar's expectations led to his tragic death less than one year later.

Cregar considered himself most fortunate, having succeeded so as an actor on such a wonderfully large scale. He also felt that the grotesques he often played were roles with great potential, and were rewarding and fun to do; he certainly had no desire to be a conventionally mundane leading man. But he realized that specializing in a certain

Cregar with Linda Darnell in his last film, **HANGOVER SQUARE**

brand of role was dangerous for an actor, and he was running out of fresh nuances with which to garnish his psychos. Acting was his first love, and he wanted to expand in the creativity of his art, not just latch on to a profitable good thing. Besides this, Cregar, like most actors, was a sensitive man, not completely complimented when some fan would babble to him about how he was ideal nightmare material. In his amusing book, **Memoirs of a Professional Cad**, the late George Sanders wrote about adjusting to being a perpetual movie villain:

"I made a much better adjustment to this sort of thing than did our poor late-lamented Laird Cregar, an actor of great talent, who was virtually assassinated by Hollywood.

"Since Laird's physique was rather too robust, his eyes rather curiously slanted, and his features inconsistent with the general mold of the fashionable leading man, he was invariably cast as a fiend. In the preamble of every script, there is a description of the leading characters.

"In the case of Laird's roles, the description would always be that of a subhuman monster. Time and time again, after reading the preamble in the script of a picture he was about to do, Laird would go into the make-up department and ask the chief make-up man what fantastic distortions of his face would be required for the part.

"The make-up man would invariably answer, 'We want you just as you are, Mr. Cregar.' "

This sickly humorous story has its point. Cregar was ripe for roles that would not require him to wreak havoc or wind up shot or poisoned. And with his sparkling **LODGER** notices and weight loss, he should have expected no less.

Several months after the release of **THE LODGER**, Fox projected the film of **LAURA**, Vera Caspary's popular mystery novel. Zanuck assigned Cregar the role of Waldo Lydecker, the acid-tongued columnist who turns out to be the murderer, with the order to lose some weight. This was something of a slap-in-the-face to Cregar, still delighted over his shed 70 lbs., as well as unnecessary, since in the book Waldo is fat. At any rate, Cregar had the role until the film's director Otto Preminger, refused to direct the young actor. Preminger felt that Cregar's familiarity as a heavy would dampen the effectiveness of the character and the film. Zanuck disagreed and temporarily stuck to his guns. When he asked Preminger who he wanted for the part, the director replied with his notoriously Teutonic arrogance that he had no idea — all he knew was that he did not want Cregar. One evening Preminger saw a play in L.A. that starred Clifton Webb, and decided he would be an ideal Waldo, But Zanuck roared in disapproval, "He flies!" (a reference to Webb's rather notorious off-stage homosexuality). However, as usual, Preminger got his way. Cregar was removed, Preminger promised to keep Webb's mincing out of camera range, and Webb began a whole new career thanks to **LAURA**.

This was a badly timed mishap for Cregar professionally; more than ever he feared the curse of being typed. He turned his attention to his writing, but worse would happen.

Cregar had read **Hangover Square**, Patrick Hamilton's novel about a young man suffering from schizophrenia. His hurt over **LAURA** was somewhat softened when he succeeded in persuading the studio to purchase the rights as a vehicle for him. But when the finished script arrived for his perusal, Cregar vehemently sent it back and refused to have anything to do with it.

Why? Fox, impressed with the receipts of **THE LODGER**, had fashioned **HANGOVER SQUARE** as a near

facsimile to it. **LODGER's** producer, Robert Bassler, director, John Brahm, and scriptwriter Barre Lyndon were retained; the story was changed from a contemporary to a turn-of-the-century setting; and the same Whitechapel lot, slightly scrubbed, was to be used. Finally, Cregar's role was written more melodramatically, augmenting his book crimes, and he refused to play the part.

Being a contract player did have disadvantages, and the studio eventually pressured the young man into doing the film. But, as Sanders wrote in his memoirs: "A tragic resolve was born in Laird's mind to make himself over into a beautiful man who would never again be cast as a fiend."

The tragedy began.

Before production started, Cregar consulted doctors and planned plastic surgery on his face so to somewhat soften its rather villainous caste. He also decided to have an abdominal operation that would control his intake of food. And lastly, he determined to mercilessly diet until the plumpness that was the talisman of his screen villainy was completely gone.

The shooting of **HANGOVER SQUARE** began in late summer of '44, with Linda Darnell and Sanders filling the other leading roles. Cregar sweated through takes in an oven-like sound stage where the lights welded with the California heat to produce nearly unbearable working conditions While Cregar had always been an exemplary professional on his pictures, well-prepared and easy to work with, he now constantly muffed lines and complained of the heat, citing it as the cause of his troubles. The sad truth was that Cregar had seriously weakened his heart through his crash dieting, and was a sick man. The cast and crew shook their heads as Cregar blew the simplest scenes and required retake upon retake.

There was an effort to somewhat "glamourize" Cregar in his role of George Harvey Bone, a musician whose bohemianism results in a schizophrenia that propels him into murderous trances. He wore a rather "mod" hairdo, and had a passionate love affair with an opportunistic singer (the beautiful Linda Darnell, bewitchingly wicked in her role). He also had scenes at the keyboards, in which his hands are in perfect accord with the notes being played on the soundtrack by the very talented Bernard Herrmann, who was composer for the film.

Throughout production, Cregar stuck to his uncompromising diet.

HANGOVER SQUARE was completed in Fall of '44, and a frazzled Cregar began preparing for his operations. He entered a Los Angeles hospital and on December 4, the abdominal operation was performed. Five mornings later, the actor was stricken with a heart attack. His physician rushed him into oxygen, and for a time it appeared he was rallying. But by evening he was failing, and on the night of December 9, 1944, Laird Cregar died.

At his bedside was his mother; his five brothers also survived him. The actor was a bachelor. His friends spoke of his many ambitions that would never be fulfilled: his unpresented plays; producer Mark Hellinger's offer to star him in his Broadway-bound **Henry VIII**, an opportunity Cregar would have loved (but was unable to immediately accept due to film commitments), and the chance to play a broad spectrum of roles that his great talent so entitled him to pursue.

Ironically, **HANGOVER SQUARE**, the film that led Cregar to his grave, emerged as an excellent thriller, with Cregar's performance an original and highly effective one. The film revealed the evidence of the diet that killed him and gave a broad panorama of his talent in his largest film role. Fox gave

Cregar top-billing in the film, released about two months after his death.

The wonderful talent of Laird Cregar can only be seen today when one of his 14 character movie roles are ressurected on the late show. His so premature death was a genuine tragedy, but fortunately, wise people judge life by width, not length. Laird Cregar spent four very happy years enjoying his ideal vocation, admired by his peers, and would be proud to know that, 30 years after his death, his work is still remembered and respected by film buffs.

THE FILMS OF LAIRD CREGAR
(Director's name follows year)

1. **OH, JOHNNY, HOW YOU CAN LOVE** - Univ '40 - Charles Lamont - Tom Brown, Peggy Moran, Allen Jenkins, Donald Meek, Isabel Jewell. 63m.
2. **GRANNY GET YOUR GUN** - WB '40 - George Amy - May Robson, Harry Davenport, Margot Stevenson, Hardie Albright, Clem Bevans, Clay Clement. 56
3. **HUDSON'S BAY** - 20th '41 - Irving Pichel - Paul Muni, John Sutton, Gene Tierney, Vincent Price, Nigel Bruce, Virginia Field. 95m.
4. **BLOOD AND SAND** - 20th '41 - Rouben Mamoulian - Tyrone Power, Rita Hayworth, Linda Darnell, Nazimova, Anthony Quinn. C-123m.
5. **CHARLEY'S AUNT** - 20th '41 - Archie Mayo - Jack Benny, Kay Francis, James Ellison, Anne Baxter, Edmund Gwenn, Reginald Owen. 81m.
6. **I WAKE UP SCREAMING** - 20th '41 - H. Bruce Humberstone - Betty Grable, Victor Mature, Carole Landis, William Gargan, Alan Mowbray, 82m.
7. **JOAN OF PARIS** - RKO '42 - Robert Stevenson - Michele Morgan, Paul Henreid, Thomas Mitchell, May Robson, Alex Granach, Alan Ladd. 95m.
8. **RINGS ON HER FINGERS** - 20th '42 - Rouben Mamoulian - Henry Fonda, Gene Tierney, Spring Byington, Shepperd Strudwick, Iris Adrian. 85m.
9. **THIS GUN FOR HIRE** - Para '42 - Frank Tuttle - Robert Preston, Veronica Lake, Alan Ladd, Tully Marshall, Mikhail Rasumny, Marc Lawrence. 80m.
10. **TEN GENTLEMEN FROM WEST POINT** - 20th '42 - Henry Hathaway - George Montgomery, Maureen O'Hara, John Sutton. 102m.
11. **THE BLACK SWAN** - 20th '42 - Henry King - Tyrone Power, Maureen O'Hara, Thomas Mitchell, George Sanders, Anthony Quinn, George Zucco. C-85m.
12. **HELLO, FRISCO, HELLO** - 20th '43 - H. Bruce Humberstone - Alice Faye, John Payne, Jack Oakie, June Havoc, Lynn Bari, Ward Bond. C-98m.
13. **HEAVEN CAN WAIT** - 20th '43 - Ernest Lubitsch - Gene Tierney, Don Ameche, Charles Coburn, Marjorie Main, Louis Calhern, C-112m.
14. **HOLY MATRIMONY** - 20th '43 - John M. Stahl - Monty Wooley, Gracie Fields, Eric Blore, Melville Cooper, Alan Mowbray, Una O'Connor. 87m.
15. **THE LODGER** - 20th '44 - John Brahm - Merle Oberon, George Sanders, Cedric Hardwicke, Sara Allgood, Aubrey Mather, Queenie Leonard. 84m.
16. **HANGOVER SQUARE** - 20th '45 - John Brahm - Linda Darnell, George Sanders, Faye Marlowe, Alan Napier, Glenn Langan, Frederic Worlock. 77m.

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BEHIND THE CAMERA

The fascinating story of the men who play such an important part in film-making---the cameramen. With an introductory essay by Leonard Maltin, and candid, in-depth interviews with five of the all-time great cinematographers---Arthur Miller, Hal Rosson, Hal Mohr, Lucien Ballard, and Conrad Hall. Illustrated with rare, revealing photographs, and accompanied by complete filmographies. A Signet Paperback. Ask for it at your local bookshop, or send $1.75 to FFM, 77 Grayson Place, Teaneck, New Jersey 07666

Cregar top-billing in the film, released about two months after his death.

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1. **OH, JOHNNY, HOW YOU CAN LOVE** - Univ '40 - Charles Lamont - Tom Brown, Peggy Moran, Allen Jenkins, Donald Meek, Isabel Jewell. 63m.
2. **GRANNY GET YOUR GUN** - WB '40 - George Amy - May Robson, Harry Davenport, Margot Stevenson, Hardie Albright, Clem Bevans, Clay Clement. 56
3. **HUDSON'S BAY** - 20th '41 - Irving Pichel - Paul Muni, John Sutton, Gene Tierney, Vincent Price, Nigel Bruce, Virginia Field. 95m.
4. **BLOOD AND SAND** - 20th '41 - Rouben Mamoulian - Tyrone Power, Rita Hayworth, Linda Darnell, Nazimova, Anthony Quinn. C-123m.
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6. **I WAKE UP SCREAMING** - 20th '41 - H. Bruce Humberstone - Betty Grable, Victor Mature, Carole Landis, William Gargan, Alan Mowbray, 82m.
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14. **HOLY MATRIMONY** - 20th '43 - John M. Stahl - Monty Wooley, Gracie Fields, Eric Blore, Melville Cooper, Alan Mowbray, Una O'Connor. 87m.
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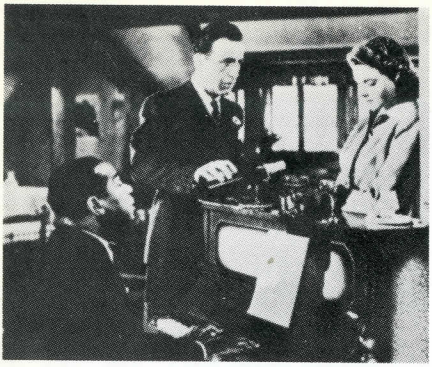

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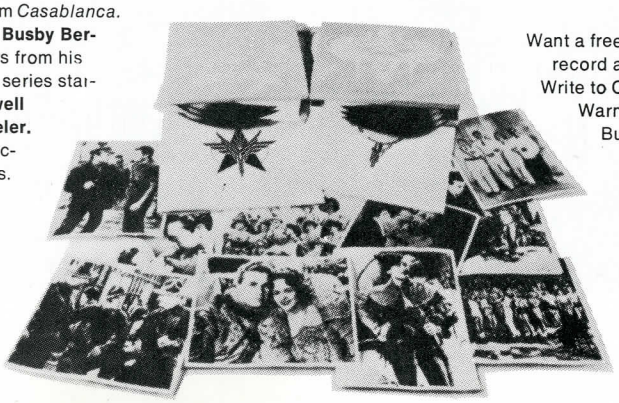

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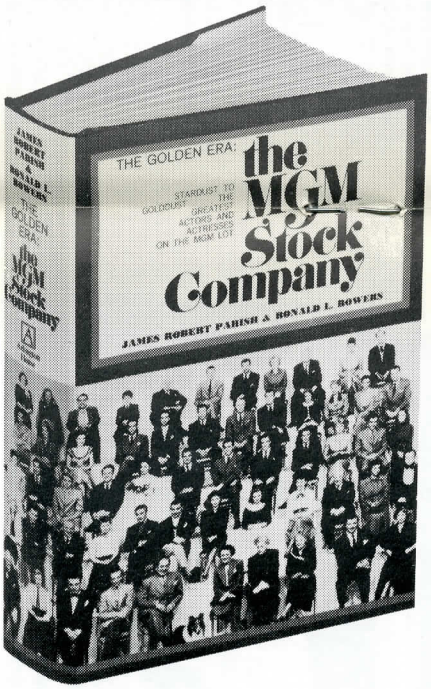

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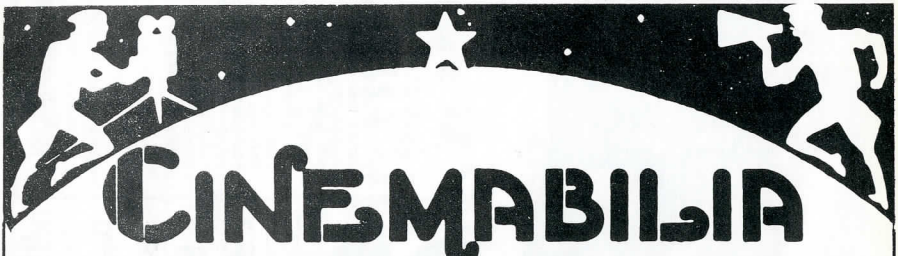

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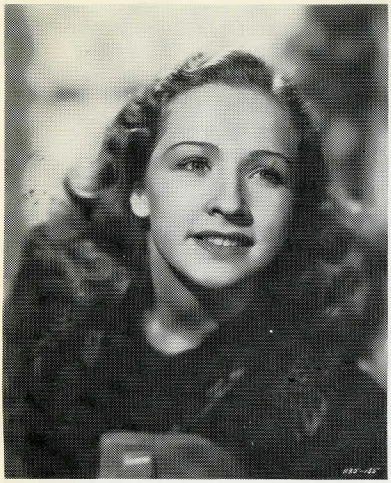

Bonita Granville

By Jerry Vermilye

In an interview given in 1940, when she was 17, Bonita Granville remarked, "Gosh, wouldn't it be awful if people always remembered me as the worst brat in the movies?"

Today, some 12 years after her formal retirement from acting, the lady might entertain second thoughts on that statement. Certainly, her delineation of Mary Tilford, the monstrous teen-aged catalyst of William Wyler's **THESE THREE** (1936) still takes honors as a Hollywood high point in youthful malevolence. So effective was Bonita's performance that it won her an Academy Award nomination, as well as a succession of brat roles in subsequent films of lesser importance.

In her formative years, Bonita Granville had scant competition from anyone but Jane Withers, who specialized in mischievous little butterballs. As she matured, Bonita progressed from unpleasant kids to that engagingly aggressive junior-sleuth Nancy Drew (in a rather short-lived series), to adolescent supporting roles in major features, alternating with ingenue *leads* in forgotten 1940s programmers. As a young adult, she gave impressive performances in a pair of thought-provoking melodramas, Edward Dmytryk's **HITLER'S CHILDREN** (1943) and Mark Robson's **YOUTH RUNS WILD** (1944). With little exception, these were the memorable parts of an acting career that spanned some 24 years, during most of which the actress was still under 21.

She was born in New York City on the 2nd of February, 1923, to show business parents. Her father, Bernard ("Bunny") Granville, had enjoyed a successful Broadway career from 1911 to 1916 as a variety artist in such efforts as **Louisiana Lou, The Whirl of the World** and various editions of the Ziegfeld Follies. Bonita's mother, Rosina Timponi Granville, was a stage dancer under the name "Tim Poni." At the age of three, the youngster became a part of her parents' vaudeville act, leading a transient childhood that stressed the theatrical life over the academic. Bonita recalls a childhood incident which, she thinks, anticipated the brat roles with which she would become so closely identified. When she was five and seated in the audience of a Chicago theatre where her father was appearing with Gregory Ratoff in a play called **Castles in the Air**, Bonita's "ham" instincts were first made manifest. Ratoff, on this occasion, went up in his lines and little Bonita, who had quietly absorbed the script at rehearsals, prompted him loudly from the third row: "I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance." To which Ratoff, facing his audience, retorted, "Nor have I yours." The child was properly

squelched, but her future was assured.

At seven, Bonita made her motion picture debut for producer-director Bryan Foy in a two-reel short in which she played the daughter of John T. Murray and Florence Lake. But it was her fair-haired resemblance to another, more celebrated blonde — Ann Harding — rather than talent, that won her her first feature-film part. By now, the Granvilles had settled in a California apartment house, in which RKO casting director Charles Richards happened to be a fellow-tenant. Richards noticed little Bonita's remarkable likeness to Harding, and cast her as the star's child in **WESTWARD PASSAGE** (1932), about a bickering couple (Laurence Olivier played the husband) who marry, divorce and eventually appear bound for remarriage. Billed tenth in the cast, the youngster had only a few scenes, chiefly aboard the trans-atlantic ship on which her estranged parents re-establish their original relationship.

WESTWARD PASSAGE led to other supporting roles for Bonita. In **SILVER DOLLAR**, a Warner Bros. costume drama based on the meteoric but scandal-clouded career of Colorado mining king Horace Tabor (Edward G. Robinson), she appeared at the bottom of a large cast. But she did play a scene with Robinson. In **CAVALCADE**, Frank Lloyd's Academy Award-winning transcription of Noel Coward's epic play about a British family through three eventful decades, she played little Fanny Bridges (Ursula Jeans as a child), who danced in the streets with her father (Herbert Mundin) to celebrate the Great War's end. In fact, Bonita was among the few exceptions to an almost all-English cast. Although voted Best Picture of 1933, **CAVALCADE** is little known — or seen — today.

At Paramount, she joined the predominently-female cast of Mitchell Leisen's **CRADLE SONG**, sporting darkened hair and exotic make-up as a

Young Bonita with Edward G. Robinson in **SILVER DOLLAR**

With Margaret Hamilton and Alma Kruger in **THESE THREE**

girl named Carmen. Other small roles followed. In 1934, Bonita again appeared in an Ann Harding vehicle, **THE LIFE OF VERGIE WINTERS** at RKO, followed the next year by brief parts in two for MGM: **A WICKED WOMAN, which introduced Austrian-born Mady Christians to the American** screen; and Clarence Brown's excellent film version of **AH, WILDERNESS!**, Eugene O'Neill's nostalgic account of growing up in a small Connecticut town.

And then came **THESE THREE.** On Broadway, **The Children's Hour,** Lillian Hellman's powerful first play had provided the dramatic sensation of the 1934-35 season. Set in a private girls' school run by a pair of unmarried young women, the plot is set in motion by Mary Tilford, a student who viciously spreads an unfounded rumor that the school's two administrators are lovers. Her lie brings about the closing of the school, a sensational libel suit and, eventually, one teacher's suicide. The play struck New York like a thunderbolt, impressing the critics and playing to enthusiastic crowds for many months. Despite the censorial scowls of Hays Office representatives, producer Samuel Goldwyn paid $50,000 for the screen rights to the incisive Hellman drama, despite an understanding with Will Hays that he could use neither the play's title nor its plot – nor even publicize his acquisition of it! In fact, one legendary story has it that when an official informed Goldwyn, "You can't film that! It's about Lesbians!" the great producer is said to have replied, "That's okay; we'll make them Americans." Hollywood thought Goldwyn was out of his mind, but that canny gentleman proved not so dumb by hiring Lillian Hellman to develop a screenplay that would retain the play's major points while appeasing censorship bodies. Under the title **THESE THREE**, Hellman turned out a strong script that, while re-working the hard-hitting specifics of her original play to suggest *heterosexual* hanky-panky, nevertheless maintained its original

theme — the power, not the nature, of a lie.

Under William Wyler's meticulous direction, Merle Oberon and Miriam Hopkins, as the two slandered teachers, gave what many consider the performances of their careers. In Britain's *The Spectator*, novelist-critic Graham Greene wrote: "I have seldom been so moved by any fictional film as by **These Three**. The more than human evil of the lying, sadistic child is suggested with quite shocking mastery by Bonita Granville. This character raises the film from the merely anecdotal, however ingenious and moving the anecdote; it has enough truth and intensity to stand for the whole of the dark side of childhood, in which the ignorance and weakness of the many allows complete mastery to the few."

In *The New York Times*, Frank S. Nugent had praise for all concerned, but singled out Bonita and Marcia Mae Jones, who played Mary's schoolgirl vassal, as deserving of the film's highest acting honors. Nor could other critics overlook the malevolent power of Bonita's characterization. In 1936, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences first instituted the Oscar category of Best Supporting Actor and Actress. Bonita was overwhelmed to find her name on a list of nominees notable for age and experience: Alice Brady in **My Man Godrey,** Maria Ouspenskaya in **Dodsworth,** Beulah Bondi in **The Gorgeous Hussy** and Gale Sondergaard in **Anthony Adverse.** Bonita lost to Sondergaard, but her career found a new and lucrative direction in projecting, with uncanny accuracy, the less admirable aspects of childhood. And, like all such type-casting, it would strongly identify her with an image that would be difficult to break. It's interesting to note that, while Bonita Granville's acting in **THESE THREE** established her career as a movie brat, this same role in Wyler's 1962 remake (now free to be called **THE CHILDREN'S HOUR** and honor the play's original Lesbian theme) offered but a one-shot opportunity to 12-year-old Karen Balkin, whose Mary Tilford was as stridently obnoxious as it was unbelievable, providing the one jarring note in an unjustly underrated movie.

THESE THREE put Hollywood producers in mind of Bonita Granville for any brat roles they might be casting, and it won her a contract with Warner Bros., although she was still allowed to play occasional parts at other studios. During 1936, she also appeared (listed 15th) in **SONG OF THE SADDLE**, a low-budget Dick Foran musical Western at Warners and, with her **THESE THREE** sidekick Marcia Mae Jones, appeared fleetingly as a convent child in the Marlene Dietrich-Charles Boyer romantic drama **THE GARDEN OF ALLAH**. Finding roles equivalent in size, if not strength, to her Mary Tilford success proved elusive. At RKO, Bonita had a small but effective part in John Ford's version of the Sean O'Casey play **THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS**, as Mollser Gogan, the consumptive tenement child who dies during Ireland's 1916 "troubles." Barbara Stanwyck and Preston Foster topped a large, chiefly Gaelic cast and, although Bonita was billed 11th, *Variety* nevertheless singled her out for excellence. Indeed, the youngster's Irish brogue was more convincing than Stanwyck's.

During 1937, Bonita was seen in five films, and the following year she was even busier. This was the heyday of her movie-brat tenure and, although she at first enjoyed the cathartic effects of venting uncharacteristic Granville malice on the sound stages, Bonita began to pall of being known as the unpleasant teen-age ingenue in movies.

In Frank Lloyd's 1937 **MAID OF SALEM** at Paramount, she gave another fine account of malicious adolescence, this time in 17th-century New England, as the deceptively-named Ann Goode, who pretends that she's been bewitched, to satisfy her

With Frank Thomas in **NANCY DREW AND THE HIDDEN STAIRCASE**

own mean motives. *The New York Times* singled out Bonita's performance, calling her "an amazingly capable child."

After small, thankless roles in two more costume dramas, **QUALITY STREET** and **THE LIFE OF EMILE ZOLA**, Bonita joined the light-comedy cast of **CALL IT A DAY**, a Warners trifle in which spring fever causes romantic complications amidst one pleasantly pixilated family. In **IT'S LOVE I'M AFTER** and **MERRILY WE LIVE**, she helped cause additional domestic problems. Reviewing the latter film, *The New York Times'* Frank S. Nugent cited "the presence of Bonita Granville, who continues to be the perfect imp of a younger sister."

And then she won her first lead – in **BELOVED BRAT,** Warners' 1938 salute to the young actress's rising popularity. It was only a 62-minute program picture, but it all centered around her character, that of a poor little rich girl who hadn't been properly raised. There were the obligatory emotional fireworks and displays of adolescent tantrums. And although Bonita played her part well, this comedy-drama placed a burden on audience patience. As one critic put it, "**Beloved Brat**, like Bonita herself, leaves us in doubt as to whether it deserves a tolerant smile or a sound spanking." Movie reviewers, of course, only judge the finished product by its entertainment value. Were there Oscars for mere hard work, Bonita might have copped one for **Beloved Brat.** In one scene, requiring that she be dragged upstairs by her hair, director Arthur Lubin demanded 15 "takes" before he was satisfied. Bonita did that scene over and over without complaint.

The year 1938 brought her good roles in a pair of sentimental dramas, although **WHITE BANNERS** was fine and moving, while **MY BILL** proved sudsy and unbelievable. The former, adapted from Lloyd Douglas's novel, had beautiful performances from Fay Bainter, as an itinerant saleswoman, and Claude Rains, the Indiana schoolteacher whose housekeeper Bainter becomes. Bonita played Rains' daughter,

opposite Jackie Cooper, an engaging juvenile who also became her steady off-screen beau, as well.

After appearing in the Olivia de Havilland-Dick Powell comedy **HARD TO GET**, Bonita was then given her very own series – as Nancy Drew, teen-aged detective of the phenomenally successful Carolyn Keene children's books. Appropriately, this series began with **NANCY DREW, DETECTIVE**, loosely based on the literary Nancy's 10th mystery story, **THE PASSWORD TO LARKSPUR LANE**, involving crooks, kidnappings and a highly-suspect rural sanitarium for elderly ladies. At 15, Bonita gave a highly energetic and charmingly aggressive account of the mythical girl sleuth who, with reluctant boy friend Ted (Frankie Thomas) in tow, solves mysteries the like of which baffle not only local police, but even her criminal-lawyer father (John Litel). During 1938 and 1939, Bonita filmed three sequels: **NANCY DREW, REPORTER; NANCY DREW, TROUBLE SHOOTER** and **NANCY DREW AND THE HIDDEN STAIRCASE**. Finally, the series waned and was abandoned, perhaps due to its failure to retain the complex, cliff-hanging plots of the Keene books. Instead, the Nancy movies substituted slapstick humor, often replacing suspense with sight gags. But William Clemens, who directed all four Nancy Drew adventures, maintained a lightening pace and managed to cram so much movement into these programmers that each one seems longer and more plot-filled than it actually is. In short, this quartet was entertaining and, in Bonita Granville, it had the perfect movie Nancy.

Bonita finished out the decade as Leo Gorcey's sister in an undistinguished but fast-paced Dead End Kids drama entitled **ANGELS WASH THEIR FACES**. It also marked the end of her association with Warner Bros. In 1940, she signed a term contract with MGM, where she continued to stir up trouble in Eddie Cantor's **FORTY LITTLE MOTHERS** and the strong anti-Nazi drama **THE MORTAL STORM**. But she found it an up-hill battle trying to convince that studio that she was now mature enough to portray young romantic leads. Expressing herself in a 1940 interview, she said: "Playing meanies is fun but gosh, I'm growing up. I'm 17 and gee, when a girl gets to be that age she likes to have people think of her as a young lady and not as a kid who beats her head on the floor every time she can't have her own way." Recalling the vicious child of **THESE THREE**, Bonita freely admitted, "That is my favorite role of all the ones I've had. I'd be a fool not to realize what it did for me, but now I feel that I've earned the right to insist on not being typed." As somewhat of an authority on "meanies," she then characterized them as falling into four distinct classifications – vicious, psychopathic, mischievous and sympathetic – further stating that she felt she'd mastered that art and would now gladly settle for adult leads.

Fortunately, Metro saw fit to loan her out to Paramount, where she co-starred with the up-and-coming William Holden in **THOSE WERE THE DAYS**, a nostalgic comedy about college life at the turn of the century. In a few scenes, the pair even got to portray old age, though not too convincingly.

Back at MGM, Bonita was cast opposite top players, though she appeared mostly in their support: with Norma Shearer, Robert Taylor and Conrad Veidt in **ESCAPE** (as Ursula, the dangerously suspicious schoolgirl) and in the lightweight romantic comedy **THIRD FINGER, LEFT HAND**, in which audiences were asked to believe that 17-year-old Bonita was the younger *sister* of 38-year-old Myrna Loy! Rounding out 1940, she was cast in a juvenile mystery drama called **GALLANT SONS**, in which she and Jackie Cooper – in the film's leading roles – set out to clear his father of a murder charge.

In 1941, Metro assigned Bonita to everything from period comedy (**THE WILD MAN OF BORNEO**, again as a brat) to the medical drama of **THE PEOPLE VS. DR. KILDARE** (as an injured ice skater whose paralysis results in a malpractice suit) to King Vidor's absorbing version of the John P. Marquand novel **H.M. PULHAM, ESQ.**, a high-class soap opera about mismatched sweethearts and their troubled marital lives. The last-named was an excellent, well-acted movie, but Bonita still wasn't getting the kind of young-adult roles she wanted, and she now chose to free-lance elsewhere. At RKO, she again teamed with her off-screen pal Jackie Cooper in **SYNCOPATION**, a black-and-white musical in which she was a New Orleans girl who partners a Chicago lad to promote their mutual love of jazz. Bosley Crowther, in *The New York Times*, wrote that the young stars played their roles "in random, uneven moods." He dubbed the movie itself "ponderous."

At Paramount, Bonita then played Brian Donlevy's younger sister in the first-rate 1942 remake of Dashiell Hammett's **THE GLASS KEY** a complex whodunit crisply directed by Stuart Heisler. This was followed by a small, thankless supporting role in **NOW, VOYAGER**, a fine Bette Davis vehicle for Warners. Rounding out 1942, she took the female lead opposite James Craig in Edward Dmytryk's **SEVEN MILES FROM ALCATRAZ**, a low-budget melodrama about escaped convicts encountering Nazi spies at a lighthouse in the San Francisco Bay. The film was not memorable, but Bonita Granville now looked increasingly more grown up than in her MGM films.

Dmytryk also directed (and co-produced) **HITLER'S CHILDREN**, a 1943 indictment against life inside Nazi Germany. Bonita played Anna Muller, a German-born American who falls in love with Karl Bruner (Tim Holt), a young Nazi officer ingrained with the Fuehrer's ideals. Their love is as doomed as their future for, though Anna manages to open Karl's eyes to

With Kent Smith in **HITLER'S CHILDREN**

the horrors of Nazidom, he dies with her, trying to "convert" his young fellow Germans. Few of the critics were impressed, although *Life* magazine called it, "A modern-day horror story of how German children are scientifically molded." One trade paper praised Bonita, Tim Holt, Kent Smith and Otto Kruger for their "masterful performances in difficult roles." In *The New York Times,* Bosley Crowther called this adaptation of Gregor Ziemer's book **Education for Death,** "an obvious, conventional melodrama." And he added, "Bonita Granville performs through the picture in a state of defiant outrage as the girl for whom the threat of sterilization is rather luridly described." But **HITLER'S CHILDREN** was a popular favorite. Produced at a cost of $167,000, it reportedly grossed over $5 million, and helped solidify Dmytryk's burgeoning career at RKO. This film is also Bonita's personal favorite.

Despite her forceful performance in **HITLER'S CHILDREN,** the actress's subsequent free-lance efforts brought her few roles of substance. In 1944, she took sixth billing in the collegiate shenanigans of **ANDY HARDY'S BLONDE TROUBLE** back at Metro, and offered sisterly advice to 15-year-old soprano Jane Powell, making her movie debut in the independently-made **SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD,** a slight musical comedy about a teen-aged movie star who rebels and joins a group of youthful hostelers and crop-pickers (led by Bonita). Somewhat more effective was her portrait of a wayward girl who comes to a sorry end in **YOUTH RUNS WILD,** a Val Lewton production for RKO. Directed by Mark Robson in his salad days, it dealt, in vignettes and an oddly neo-realistic style, with wartime juvenile delinquency, the result of neglect by parents otherwise preoccupied with defense jobs.

At Universal, Bonita starred in a pair of forgettable programmers entitled **THE BEAUTIFUL CHEAT** (she was a secretary masquerading as a delinquent) and **SENORITA FROM THE WEST** (as an orphan trying to forge a singing career). Neither did much for *her* career. Nor did her 1946 efforts: **BREAKFAST IN HOLLYWOOD** (providing love-interest in this cash-in on a successful radio show) and THE TRUTH ABOUT MURDER, a program mystery in which she was cast as – believe it or not – a young *lawyer* teamed with a D.A. (Morgan Conway) to track down a photographer's killer.

She then had an effective "other woman" role in **SUSPENSE** (1946), an expensive effort to combine a murder-melodrama with an ice-skating extravaganza. Monogram Pictures, then attempting to cast off its "Poverty Row" reputation and best the dubious competition of Republic Pictures' skating-actress Vera Hruba Ralston, advertised it as their first "million-dollar release." Bonita played the jilted sweetheart of Barry Sullivan, a thankless cad who, to get ice-ballerina Belita, bumps off her husband. In the end, Bonita gets even with the callous Sullivan by letting him have it with her pocket automatic. And, as Belita skates on to new triumphs, Bonita is led away by the police. In *The New York Times*, Bosley Crowther summarily dismissed **SUSPENSE,** terming Bonita's acting "elaborately dramatic."

Twentieth Century-Fox now tested her for the alcoholic Sophie MacDonald in Somerset Maugham's **THE RAZOR'S EDGE**, a role in which she might have dramatically altered the course of a plodding career. But the coveted part went to Fox contract player Anne Baxter, who won a supporting-actress Oscar with it. And Bonita returned to MGM to repeat her Kay Wilson role opposite Mickey Rooney in the juvenile comedy **LOVE LAUGHS AT ANDY HARDY.**

Bonita's career then took a significant turn when she met John Devereaux Wrather Jr., a 28-year-old Texas

oilman making his debut as a motion picture producer with **THE GUILTY**, a low-budget mystery melodrama for Monogram release. In this film's dual-lead, the actress found a poor man's answer to Bette Davis in **A STOLEN LIFE** and Olivia de Havilland in **THE DARK MIRROR** – the opportunity to portray twin sisters of widely contrasting personalities, though there the similarities ended. *The New York Times* called **The Guilty**, "a mildly satisfying whodunit," and credited its star with "a one-dimensional portrayal." On February 5, 1947, prior to the movie's release, Bonita and Jack Wrather were wed. To this date, their union – one of Hollywood's few successes – has produced four children and one grandchild.

Since her marriage, Bonita Granville's domestic life has taken precedence over her public one. She's made only three movies, each produced by Wrather, who has also turned out several films without her. In 1949, she provided the female love interest, opposite Rod Cameron and Don Castle, in **STRIKE IT RICH**, an arrid drama about wildcat oilmen. In **GUILTY OF TREASON** (1950), a fact-based drama alluding to the famed Cardinal Mindszenty case, she played a sympathetic Hungarian girl, who is tortured to death after betrayal by her Soviet-officer lover (Richard Derr). That her performance had little substance was more the fault of Emmet Lavery's screenplay and Felix Feist's direction, neither of which allowed much space for character development or audience involvement. **GUILTY OF TREASON** was more effective in ladeling out its anti-Red message than in depicting social realism.

In 1956, Bonita's last feature film, **THE LONE RANGER**, was released. Stuart Heisler (The Glass Key) directed this outdoor comic strip for the action that fans of the popular radio series had come to expect, with Clayton Moore and Jay Silverheels well cast as the legendary Western hero and his sidekick, Tonto. As the brutalized wife of that prime 1950s movie-villain Lyle Bettger, Bonita had little to do but register the appropriate horror and concern in the face of gun battles and Indian attacks.

Since becoming Mrs. Wrather, the actress has been more involved with television than movies. In the 1950s, she frequently accepted roles in anthology series like "Hollywood Half Hour," "Climax" and "Lux Video Theatre." But undoubtedly her greatest personal success was in the 1953 "Broadway TV Theatre" stock-company production of **Guest in the House** in which, during five consecutive nights of *live* performance over New York City's WOR-TV, Bonita gave so forceful an account of malicious psychosis that watching film buffs could easily forget Anne Baxter in the 1944 movie version and divine that this attractive monster could be none other than Lillian Hellman's spiteful little Mary Tilford grown to womanhood. It was Bonita's finest TV hour-and-a-half.

In 1964, Bonita Granville Wrather (as she prefers to be known) became associate producer of the immensely popular **Lassie** television series, which Wrather had very profitably owned for a decade. And, in 1969, she branched out into *directing* one Christmas-oriented show in the series. The following year, she acted in another episode.

The **Lassie** show has weathered various masters and formats, and Bonita is very defensive about its purpose: "We sell morals – morals and soup!" Sounding off in an interview, she once declared: "I'm terribly old-fashioned, in a way. **Lassie** is a wholesome, family-type show. It will always be that. I've taken to the soapbox to complain about indecent movies. **Lassie** is one way to combat them." The winner of two Emmys and a Peabody Award, **Lassie**, while no longer a network show, remains in syndication

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as TV's longest-running series.

Today, in an era when middle-aged actresses are hard put to find suitable roles of any kind, Bonita Granville Wrather is undoubtedly wise to remain behind the cameras, helping to turn out a product in which she believes. And, if there are no longer any child stars to equal her memorable brand of 1930s mischief, than that's Hollywood's loss. But, for vintage Granville, there's still the Late Show.

THE FILMS OF BONITA GRANVILLE

(Director's Name Follows Year)

1. **WESTWARD PASSAGE** - RKO '32 - Robert Milton - Ann Harding, Laurence Olivier, Irving Pichel, Juliette Compton, Zasu Pitts, Irene Purcell. 73 min.
2. **SILVER DOLLAR** - WB '32 - Alfred E. Green - Edward G. Robinson, Bebe Daniels, Aline MacMahon, Jobyna Howland, DeWitt Jennings. 84 min.
3. **CAVALCADE** - Fox '33 - Frank Lloyd - Diana Wynyard, Clive Brook, Ursula Jeans, Herbert Mundin, Una O'Connor, Merle Tottenham. 110 min.
4. **CRADLE SONG** - Par '33 - Mitchell Leisen - Dorothea Wieck, Evelyn Venable, Sir Guy Standing, Louise Dresser, Kent Taylor, Gertrude Michael. 78 min.
5. **THE LIFE OF VERGIE WINTERS** - RKO '34 - Alfred Santell - Ann Harding, John Boles, Helen Vinson, Betty Furness, Frank Albertson. 82 min.
6. **A WICKED WOMAN** - MGM '35 - Charles Brabin - Mady Christians, Jean Parker, Charles Bickford, Betty Furness, William Henry, Jackie Searle. 74 m.
7. **AH, WILDERNESS!** - MGM '35 - Clarence Brown - Wallace Beery, Lionel Barrymore, Aline MacMahon, Eric Linden, Cecilia Parker. 99 min.
8. **THESE THREE** - UA '36 - William Wyler - Miriam Hopkins, Merle Oberon, Joel McCrea, Catherine Doucet, Alma Kruger, Marcia Mae Jones. 92 min.
9. **SONG OF THE SADDLE** - WB '36 - Louis King - Dick Foran, Alma Lloyd, Charles Middleton, Addison Richards, Eddie Shubert, Monte Montague. 58 m.

Lyle Bettger and Bonita in **THE LONE RANGER**

10. **THE GARDEN OF ALLAH** - UH '36 - Richard Bloeslawski - Marlene Dietrich, Charles Boyer, Basil Rathbone, C. Aubrey Smith, Tilly Losch. 80 min.
11. **THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS** - RKO '37 - John Ford - Barbara Stanwyck, Preston Foster, Barry Fitzgerald, Denis O'Dea, Eileen Crowe. 67 min.
12. **MAID OF SALEM** - Par '37 - Frank Lloyd - Claudette Colbert, Fred MacMurray, Harvey Stephens, Gale Sondergaard, Louise Dresser. 86 min.
13. **QUALITY STREET** - RKO '37 - George Stevens - Katharine Hepburn, Franchot Tone, Eric Blore, Fay Bainter, Cora Witherspoon, Estelle Winwood. 84 min.
14. **CALL IT A DAY** - WB '37 - Archie Bayo, Olivia de Haviland, Ian Hunter, Anita Louise, Alice Brady, Roland Young, Frieda Inescort, Peggy Wood, 89 min.
15. **THE LIFE OF EMILE ZOLA** - WB '37 - William Dieterle - Paul Muni, Joseph Schildkraut, Gale Sondergaard, Gloria Holden, Donald Crisp. 116 min.
16. **IT'S LOVE I'M AFTER** - WB '37 - Archie Mayo - Leslie Howard, Bette Davis, Olivia de Havilland, Patric Knowles, Eric Blore, George Barbier. 90 min.
17. **MERRILY WE LIVE** - MGM '38 - Norman Z. McLeod - Constance Bennett, Brian Aherne, Billie Burke, Alan Mowbray, Patsy Kelly. 90 min.
18. **BELOVED BRAT** - WB '38 - Arthur Lubin - Dolores Costello, Donald Crisp, Donald Briggs, Natalie Moorhead, Lucille Gleason, Emmett Vogan. 62 m
19. **WHITE BANNERS** - WB '38 - Edmund Goulding - Claude Rains, Fay Bainter, Jackie Cooper, Henry O'Neill, Kay Johnson, James Stephenson. 88 min.
20. **MY BILL** - WB '38 - John Farrow - Kay Francis, Dickie Moore, John Litel, Anita Louise, Bobby Jordan, Maurice Murphy, Elisabeth Risdon. 64 min.
21. **HARD TO GET** - WB '38 - Ray Enright - Dick Powell, Olivia de Havilland, Charles Winninger, Allen Jenkins, Melville Cooper, Isabel Jeans . 80 min.
22. **NANCY DREW, DETECTIVE** - WB '38 - William Clemens - John Litel, James Stephenson, Frankie Thomas, Frank Orth, Renie Riano. 67 min.
23. **ANGELS WAS THEIR FACES** - WB '39 - Ray Enright - Ann Sheridan, Billy Helop, Bernard Punsley, Leo Gorcey, Huntz Hall, Gabriel Dell. 76 min.
24. **NANCY DREW, REPORTER** - WB '39 - William Clemens - John Litel, Frankie Thomas, Mary Lee, Sheila Bromley, Larry Williams, Betty Amann. 65 min.
25. **NANCY DREW, TROUBLE SHOOTER** - WB '39 - William Clemens - Frankie Thomas, John Litel, Aldrich Bowker, Charlotte Wynters. 70 min.
26. **NANCY DREW AND THE HIDDEN STAIRCASE** - WB '39 - William Clemens - Frankie Thomas, John Litel, Frank Orth, Renie Riano. 78 min.
27. **FORTY LITTLE MOTHERS** - MGM '40 - Busby Berkeley - Eddie Cantor, Judith Anderson, Rita Johnson, Ralph Morgan, Diana Lewis. 90 min.
28. **THE MORTAL STORM** - MGM '40 - Frank Borzage - Margaret Sullavan, James Stewart, Robert Young, Frank Morgan, Robert Stack, Irene Rich. 100 min.
29. **THOSE WERE THE DAYS** - Par '40 - J. Theodore Reed - William Holden, Ezra Stone, Judith Barrett, Vaughan Glaser, Lucien Littlefield. 76 min.
30. **ESCAPE** - MGM '40 - Mervyn LeRoy - Norma Shearer, Robert Taylor, Conrad Veidt, Nazimova, Felix Bressart, Albert Bassermann, Philip Dorn. 104 min.
31. **THIRD FINGER, LEFT HAND** - MGM '40 - Robert Z. Leonard - Myrna Loy, Melvyn Douglas, Raymond Walburn, Lee Bowman, Felix Bressart. 98 min.
32. **GALLANT SONS** - MGM '40 - George B. Seitz - Jackie Cooper, Gene Reynolds, Gail Patrick, Ian Hunter, June Preisser, Leo Gorcey, William Tracy. 73 min.
33. **THE PEOPLE VS. DR. KILDARE** - MGM '41 - Harold S. Bucquet - Lew Ayres, Lionel Barrymore, Laraine Day, Alma Kruger, Red Skelton. 78 min.
34. **THE WILD MAN OF BORNEO** - MGM '41 - Robert B. Sinclair - Frank Morgan, Mary Howard, Billie Burke, Marjorie Main, Walter Catlett. 78 min.
35. **DOWN IN SAN DIEGO** - MGM '41 - Robert B. Sinclair - Dan Dailey, Jr., Ray McDonald, Leo Gorcey, Stanley clements, Henry O'Neill. 70 min.

36. **H.M. PULHAM, ESQ.** - MGM '41 - King Vidor - Hedy Lamarr, Robert Young, Ruth Hussey, Charles Coburn, Van Heflin, Fay Holden. 120 min.
37. **SYNCOPATION** - RKO '42 - William Dieterle - Adolphe Menjou, Jackie Cooper, George Bancroft, Ted North, Todd Duncan. 88 min.
38. **THE GLASS KEY** - Par '42 - Stuart Heisler - Brian Donlevy, Veronica Lake, Alan Ladd, Joseph Calleia, Richard Denning, Moroni Olsen. 85 min.
39. **NOW, VOYAGER** - WB '42 - Irving Rapper - Bette Davis, Paul Henreid, Claude Rains, Gladys Cooper, Ilka Chase, John Loder, Lee Patrick. 117 min.
40. **SEVEN MILES FROM ALCATRAZ** - RKO '42 - Edward Dmytryk - James Craig, Frank Jenks, Cliff Edwards, George Cleveland, Erford Gage. 62 min.
41. **HITLER'S CHILDREN** - RKO '43 - Edward Dmytryk - Tim Holt, Kent Smith, Otto Kruger, H.B. Warner, Lloyd Corrigan, Erford Gage, Hans Conried. 83 m
42. **ANDY HARDY'S BLONDE TROUBLE** - MGM '44 - George B. Seitz - Lewis Stone, Mickey Rooney, Fay Holden, Sara Haden, Herbert Marshall. 107 min.
43. **SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD** - UA '44 - S. Sylvan Simon - Jane Powell, Jackie Moran, Peggy O'Neill, Bill Christy, Regis Toomey, Rose Hobart Sig Arno. 93 m
44. **YOUTH RUNS WILD** - RKO '44 - Mark Robson - Kent Smith, Jean Brooks, Glenn Vernon, Tessa Brind (Vanessa Brown), Ben Bard, Mary Servoss. 67 min
45. **THE BEAUTIFUL CHEAT** - Univ '45 - Charles Barton - Noah Beery Jr., Margaret Irving, Sara Selby, Irene Ryan, Carol Hughes, Milburn Stone. 59 min.
46. **SENORITA FROM THE WEST** - Univ '45 - Frank Strayer - Allan Jones, Jess Barker, Olin Howland (Howlin), Danny Mummert, Emmett Vogan. 63 m.
47. **BREAKFAST IN HOLLYWOOD** - UA '46 - Harold Schuster - Tom Breneman, Eddie Ryan, Beulah Bondi, Raymond Walburn, Billie Burke, ZaSu Pitts, 93 m
48. **THE TRUTH ABOUT MURDER** - RKO '46 - Lew Landers - Morgan Conway, Rita Corday, Don Douglas, June Clayworth, Edward Norris. 63 min.
49. **SUSPENSE** - Mon '46 - Frank Tuttle - Belita, Barry Sullivan, Albert Dekker, Eugene Pallette, George E. Stone, Edit Angold. 101 min.
50. **LOVE LAUGHS AT ANDY HARDY** - MGM '47 - Willis Goldbeck - Mickey Rooney, Lewis Stone, Sara Haden, Lina Romay, Fay Holden. 93 min.
51. **THE GUILTY** - Mon '47 - John Reinhardt - Don Castle, Wally Cassel, Regis Toomey, John Litel, Ruth Robinson, Thomas Jackson, Oliver Blake. 71 min.
52. **STRIKE IT RICH** - AA '49 - Lesley Selander - Rod Cameron, Don Castle, Stuart Erwin, Lloyd Corrigan, Ellen Corby, Emory Parnell, Harry Tyler, 81 min.
53. **GUILTY OF TREASON** - EL '50 - Felix Feist - Charles Bickford, Paul Kelly, Richard Derr, Berry Kroeger, Elizabeth Risdon, Roland Winters. 86 min.
54. **THE LONE RANGER** - WB '56 - Stuart Heisler - Clayton Moore, Jay Silverheels, Lyle Bettger, Perry Lopez, Robert Wilke, John Pickard. 86 min.

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85/86 - Ray Milland; Dorothy Malone; Frances Mercer; Edgar Rice Burroughs
87 - Disney assault; Claudia Cardinale; Von Sternberg on Von Stroheim; Garbo; Frank Puglia; Serials "The Clutching Hand," "The Black Coin"
88 - Evelyn Ankers; Billy Gilbert; Kay Francis, Dennis O'Keefe tributes
89 - Rex Ingram; Ida Lupino - Director; The "Tom & Jerry" cartoons
90 - Lubitsch; Elizabeth Bergner; Betsy King Ross; Jean Hagen
91 - Robert Youngson; Audrey Totter; Tallulah; "The Parade's Gone By"
92 - Gloria DeHaven interview; Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Joseph Wiseman, Oscar Homolka, Luther Adler on TV; Sunset Carson; Donald Meek
93 - Tallulah Bankhead; Mary Pickford program
94 - Elliott Nugent interview; Wild Bill Elliott
95 - Ann Dvorak; Byron Foulger; Ken Maynard
96 - Robert Taylor; Margaret Kerry; Anne Revere
97/98 - Special Charley Chase issue
99 - Joan Blondell interview; Tom Conway; Barbara Pepper
100 - Dorothy Granger; Grady Sutton
101 - AFI Rediscoveries; Ann Savage
102 - Karloff on TV; Sarah Bernhardt; Blanche Yurka; Joyce Compton
103 - Interview with Mitchell Leisen
104 - Henry Wilcoxon interview; Backstage with Ann Miller; Disney Co.
105 - Scotty Beckett; D. W. Griffith; Barbara Bates; Roscoe Karns
106 - Special Claudette Colbert issue
107 - Janet Blair; Hans Conried interview; Early Fox talkies
108 - Johnny Mack Brown; Sara Allgood; Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. interview
109/110 - Leon Errol; Earl Carroll girls; Johnny Mack Brown film index
111 - Ralph Bellamy interview; Johnny Mack Brown index, part 2
112 - Paul Lukas; Pop Singers on the Screen; Brown index, part 3
113 - Jane Frazee; Brown index, part 4
114 - Mary Pickford; Buddy Rogers interview; Pop Singers; Brown part 5
115 - Una Merkel interview; Brown part 6
116 - Irene Dunne Today; Old Faces in New Films; Brown part 7
117 - Patsy Kelly interview; George Marshall on "Murder, He Says"; Brown part 8
118 - Harold Lloyd tribute; Gale Sondergaard interview; Rita Johnson
119 - Gail Russell; George O'Brien interview; John Ford; Brown part 9
120 - Vera-Ellen; Edgar Buchanan interview; Brown part 10
121/122 - Ruby Keeler; Fox Films on TV; Sidney Fox; Brown part 11
123 - Jack Haley; John Hodiak; Vivien Oakland; Film Report
124 - Olivia de Havilland; Frank Capra; Terry Kilburn; Writing 2-reelers
125 - Lizabeth Scott; Betty Bronson; Carol Dempster
126 - "The Gang's All Here"; Irene Hervey; Robert Florey on TV
127 - Helen Twelvetrees; Bess Flowers; The Hollywood Studio Club
128 - Old Faces in New Films; Fifi D'Orsay
129 - MGM Revisited; Gladys George; Mabel Paige
130 - Betty Boop; Vivian Blaine; Cass Daley; Keaton, DeMille at MGM
131 - Marie Dressler-Polly Moran; George O'Brien; Iris Adrian, Hal LeRoy; Almira Sessions
132 - Will Rogers; Cecil Cunningham; Robert Douglas
133/134 - Dorothy Lamour; Torchy Blane; MGM; Technicolor; Animation festival
135 - Marilyn Maxwell; Janet Gaynor at Fox; Virginia O'Brien; MGM
136 - George Brent; Vivienne Segal
137 - Edna May Oliver; Jeff Donnell
138 - Madge Evans; Soundtracks
139 - Jessie Matthews; Victor Varconi; Lionel Atwill; Tourneur on TV
140 - Old Faces in New Films; Bette Davis at Town Hall; Henry Aldrich
141 - Myrna Loy Today; Photoplay's Ruth Waterbury
142 - Soundies; Ruth Roman; Virginia Field
143 - Astaire; Marie McDonald; Keye Luke
144 - Popeye; Lee Patrick
145/146 - Betty Grable; Harry Warren, RKO; Warner Bros. cartoons; Houstoncon
147 - Mary Wickes; Fanny Brice; RKO
148 - John Carradine; Mary Field; RKO; Sheila O'Brien
149 - Carole Landis; Maude Eburne; RKO

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